



## **Budget Unit: Early Childhood Iowa Initiative**

### **General Aid Preschool Tuition Assistance Family Support and Parent Education**

**BU Number: 2820II90001  
BU Number: 2820IC20001  
BU Number: 2820I600001**

#### **Overview**

The Early Childhood Iowa (ECI) initiative was established to allow the State and communities to work together to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of early care, education, health, and human services provided to families with children from zero through age five. ECI is administered by the ECI State Board. The ECI State Board promotes a vision for a comprehensive early care, education, health, and human services system in this state. The Board consists of 21 voting members, 15 citizen members, and six state agency members. The six state agency members are the directors or their designees from the following departments: Economic Development Authority, Education, Human Rights, Human Services, Public Health, and Workforce Development. The ECI State Board includes four legislators as nonvoting members.

The State Board provides oversight and manages the school ready children grant (SRG) funding made available from the General Fund appropriation to the local ECI Area Boards. The SRG funding is distributed based on data from the most recent United States Census according to the following formula:

- 45.0% based on children age 0-5 with family income up to 185.0% of the federal poverty level
- 35.0% based on the total children age 0-5
- 20.0% base funding allocated equally among the 99 counties

The purpose of an ECI Area is to enable local citizens to lead collaborative efforts in strategic planning, oversight, and managing of programs and the funding made available to the ECI Area for such programs from federal, state, local, and private sources. The focus of the ECI Area is to achieve the following desired results:

- Healthy children
- Children ready to succeed in school
- Safe and supportive communities
- Secure and nurturing families
- Secure and nurturing early learning environments

#### **More Information**

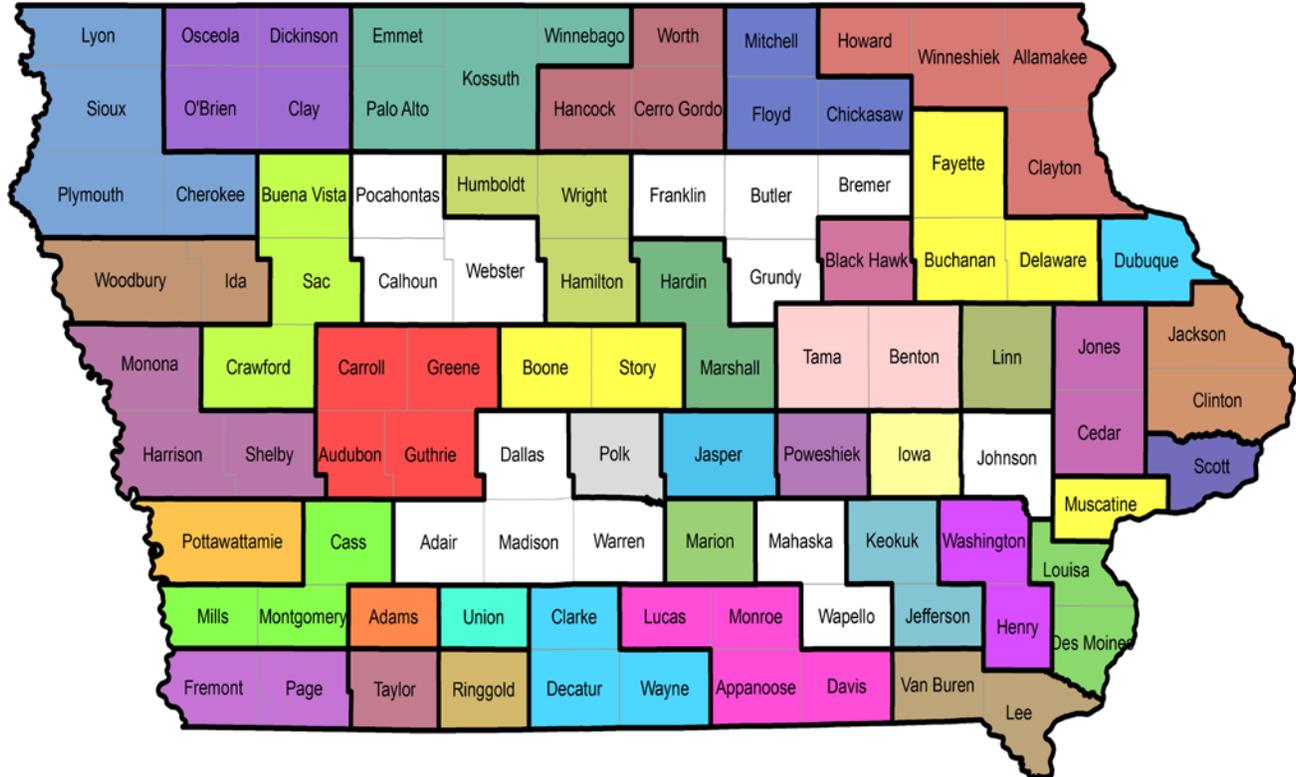
Early Childhood Iowa: <http://www.earlychildhoodiowa.org/index.html>

Iowa General Assembly: <http://www.legis.iowa.gov/index.aspx>

LSA Staff Contact: John Parker (515-725-2249) [John.Parker@legis.iowa.gov](mailto:John.Parker@legis.iowa.gov)

## Early Childhood Iowa Initiative

The ECI State Board oversees 45 ECI Area Boards that follow county boundaries.



### General Aid (BU Number: 2820II90001)

The ECI General Aid received a General Fund appropriation of \$5.4 million in FY 2013. Within the appropriation are three separate funding allocations for specific purposes, as follows:

- *Early Childhood Iowa Office and Technical Assistance.* An allocation of \$265,950 is provided to the ECI office within the Department of Management for technical assistance and to provide skill development and support for training the ECI State Board. The ECI State Board cannot use these funds for legal fees, fiscal agent fees, and liability insurance. The allocation also cannot be used by ECI staff in completing administrative responsibilities, for example, work related to ECI Board meetings, issuing and monitoring of contracts, and processing payment claims.
- *Quality Improvement.* An allocation of \$2,318,018 is to be used by local ECI Areas to improve the quality of early care, health, and education programs. ECI Areas can use the funding for additional staff and for the reimbursement of staff. The ECI State Board allocates \$30,000 to each ECI Area under this allocation to support staff. The ECI State Board can reserve a portion of this allocation, not to exceed \$88,650, for the technical assistance expenses of the ECI State Office. The remaining funds under this allocation are distributed to ECI Areas based on the SRG formula.
- *Professional Development and Training.* An allocation of \$825,030 is used to support professional development and training activities for people working in early care, health, and education. Professional development and training is available to the ECI State Board, ECI Area Boards, and the Early Childhood Stakeholders Alliance. The Alliance supports and provides broad input to the ECI State Board in developing a high quality early childhood system that meets the needs of children and their families. The Alliance includes members from any organization that touches the lives of young children in the State from zero to five years old.

**Funding:** Funding includes the allocations described above with a remainder of approximately \$2.0 million distributed through the SRG formula to the ECI Areas.

### Preschool Tuition Assistance (BU Number: 2820IC20001)

The ECI Preschool Assistance funding is used for early care, health, and education programs to assist low-income parents with tuition for preschool and other supportive services for children three, four, and five years old who are not attending kindergarten. This funding is to help families with income up to 200.0% of the federal poverty guidelines with tuition for preschool that is not covered under the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for Four-Year-Old Children. The ECI Area Boards may provide preschool tuition assistance for those with a family income in excess of the basic income eligibility requirement through use of a sliding scale or other copayment provisions.

**Funding:** The ECI Preschool Assistance was first funded in FY 2010 and has averaged \$6.8 million in General Fund appropriations per year for the period of FY 2010 to FY 2013. The funding is distributed to the ECI Areas using the SRG formula.

### Family Support and Parent Education (BU Number: 2820I600001)

This appropriation is used for family support and parent education programs targeted to families expecting a child or with newborn and infant children through five years old. Family support programs include group-based parent education or home visitation programs that are designed to strengthen protective factors, including parenting skills, increasing parental knowledge of child development, and increasing family functioning and problem-solving skills. A family support program may be used as an early intervention strategy to improve birth outcomes, parental knowledge, family economic success, the home learning environment, family and child involvement with others, and coordination with other community resources. A family support program may have a specific focus on preventing child maltreatment or ensuring children are safe, healthy, and ready to succeed in school.

[Senate File 2321](#) (2012 Iowa Acts) requires funding for family support and parent education to be directed toward home visitation programs that are evidence-based or promising program models. The General Assembly requires the following phase-in schedule for home visitation programs:

- By July 1, 2013, 25.0% of State funds expended for home visitation programs that are evidence-based or promising program models.
- By July 1, 2014, 50.0% of State funds expended for home visitation programs that are evidence-based or promising program models.
- By July 1, 2015, 75.0% of State funds expended for home visitation programs that are evidence-based or promising program models.
- By July 1, 2016, 90.0% of State funds expended for home visitation programs that are evidence-based or promising program models. The remaining 10.0% of funds may be used for innovative program models that do not yet meet the definition of evidence-based or promising programs.

An evidence-based program is a program that is based on scientific evidence demonstrating that the program model is effective. An evidence-based program is to be reviewed on site and compared to program model standards by the model developer or the developer's designee at least once every five years to ensure that the program continues to maintain fidelity with the program model.

A promising program is one that meets all of the following requirements:

- Conforms to a clear, consistent family support model that has been in existence for at least three years.
- Grounded in relevant empirically-based knowledge.
- Linked to program-determined outcomes.
- Associated with a national or state organization that either has comprehensive program standards to ensure high-quality service delivery and continuous program quality improvement, or the program model has demonstrated through benchmark outcomes that have achieved significant positive outcomes equivalent to those achieved by program models with published significant and sustained results in a peer-reviewed journal.
- The program has been awarded the Iowa family support credential and has been reviewed on site at least every five years to ensure the program's adherence to the Iowa family support standards approved by the ECI State Board created in [Iowa Code section 256I.3](#) or a comparable set of standards. The on-site review is completed by an independent review team that is not associated with the program or the organization administering the program.

**Funding:** The ECI Family Support and Parent Education effort is funded by a General Fund appropriation. For the period of FY 2010 to FY 2013, the funding averaged \$12.9 million per year. Prior to FY 2010, the ECI was known as Empowerment, and funding allocations differed compared to the current budget unit. The ECI also receives money from the Federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant to enhance quality child care capacity in support of parent capability to obtain or retain employment. An example would be to increase access to child care for parents working the second and third shift. The Federal TANF Block Grant averaged \$7.0 million from FY 2004 to FY 2013. The Department of Human Services transfers federal dollars from the TANF Block Grant to the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF). The ECI Area Boards receive the funds based on a formula that takes into account the Family Support programs implemented in the preceding state fiscal year.

### Related Statutes and Administrative Rules

Iowa Code chapter [256I](#)

Iowa Administrative Code: [249 IAC](#) and [541 IAC](#)